A SERMON OF REpentance.

A very godly and profitable Sermon preached at Lee in Essex by *Arthur Dent, Minister of Gods word:* and published at the request of *sundrie godlie and well dispo*sed persons.

1581

The vij of March.

Ionach. 2. 8.

They that wait upon lieng vanities forsake their owne mercie.

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1589

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In Concionem Arthuri Dent G. Pewdæi Carmen.

MAturè resipisce, precor, peccatáq; linque,
Qui legis aut audis, quisquis es, istud opus
Sin nova peccatis peccata prioribus addes,
Olim hæc te contra Concio testis erit:
Hac aliquot lecta flentes sua crimina, multum
Mutarunt mores, & nova vita placet.

The same in English.

THou that dost read or hear this work
I wish thee to do this:
Repent in time, and sinne forsake,
Amend that is amisse.
But if thou wilt adde sinne to sinne,
not minding to amend,
This Sermon shall a witnes be,
against thee in the end.
Some that have heard this read of late,
lamenting much their sin:
Have changde their former manners,
and a new life now begin.

TO THE READER.



Although I was moſt unwilling that this poore talent & travell of mine ſhould ever have been broched abroade, and come to light; both bicauſe it may ſeem as a Candle lighted at noone day; as alſo bicauſe manie other mens dooings might more woorthily a great deale have been publiſhed, and committed unto letters: yet bicauſe divers which heard it preached with a lively voice, were very inſtant, yea and more than importunate with me to have it publiſhed, uſing ſuch reaſons as I could not greatly gainſay, I did at the laſt yeeld to their requeſt, and ſo this untimely fruite is come abroade, to be ſolde in open markets. Let no man be offended that I have not ſtrained my ſelfe to flie an high pitch, to ſome out the froth of mans wiſedome, and to make a great ſhew of learning, by blowing

ing the bladder of vanitie til it burſt with ſwelling. For that is not my uſe, I ſeeke eſpecially the ſalvation of the ſimple and ignorant, and therefore ſtowpe downe to their reach and capacitie. Therefore I beſeech thee gentle Reader, accept my good meaning: Read this without prejudice, like it as thou profiteſt, ſo ſhalt thou have praiſe of God, and comfort in thy conſcience.

A. D.

A SERMON OF REPENTANCE.

The Text, Luke 13. 5.

I tell you nay: but except you repent, you shall all likewise perish.

THe occasion of these wordes of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, was, because there were certaine that shewed him of the *Galileans*, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their owne sacrifices: That is, murdered them as they were sacrificing; & so their blood was mingled with the blood of the beasts which were sacrificed. Those men therefore thought that those *Galileans* were greater sinners than all other *Galileans*, because they had suffered such things: & that those eighteene also, upon whome the Tower in *Siloam* fell and slue them, were sinners above al men that dwelt in *Hierusalem*. Wherein they did utter a secret corruption, naturally ingendered in all men,

that is, very sharply to see into the sinnes of others, and severely to censure them: but in the meane while to flatter themselves, and to be blindfolded in seeing their owne sinnes. For these men thought because the like judgements did not fall upon them, therefore they were safe ynough, they were not so great sinners, but rather highly in the favour of God: According as many do falsly suppose, that those are alwaies the worst sort of people, whom God doth most strike, and presse with his punishing hand, having forgotten that God doth not keepe an ordinarie rate here below, to punish every man as he is worst, or to favour and reward him as he is best, but onely taketh some examples as he thinketh good, for the instruction and advertisment of al others, and to be as it were looking glasses, wherein every man may see his owne face, yea and his owne cause handled, and that God is a severe revenger of sinne, that all men may learn by the example of some to tremble and beware, least peradventure they be worthily constrained to keepe their owne turnes, and to know what they have deserved. These men which brought these newes to our Saviour Christ had taken

[illegible] this lesson: whereupon our Saviour is [illegible] occasioned to correct their [illegible] and sinister judgement, and to teach them that they must not rejoice at the sad punishments of others, but rather to be instructed thereby to repentance.

And further to signifie, that God doth not alwaies most punish the most notorious offenders, as Murtherers, Theeves, Robbers, Whoremaisters, Blasphemers, Quarrellers, Scoffers, and such like, but reserveth them unto the judgement of the great day, and as it were fatteth them against the day of slaughter, and therefore he answereth them negatively, and saith Nay, or not so, but except ye repent, you shall all likewise perish, as if he should say, are you all of this opinion in deed, that only monstrous sinners are punished in this world, and others let alone? or that the Galileans and those eighteene upon whom the Tower in Siloam fell, were greater sinners than all others? Or do you thinke because the same judgements have not light upon you, therefore you shall scape away in the darke, and escape the judgement of God? No, no, you are deceived. For I say unto you, that except you mourne and lament

ment for your sins, and fall to some [illegible] unfeined [illegible] God in time, (you I [illegible] you which are so ready to condemn others, and justifie your selves) shall not onely perish with the like judgements in this present world, but be everlastingly condemned in the world to come. So that our Saviour in so saying, doth thunder downe a most dreadful sentence upon all our heads: for he concludeth & setteth it downe, that al men living upon the face of the earth, whether they be high or low, rich, or poore, young or old, noble or unnoble, learned, or unlearned, simple or politike, of what estate, degree, and condition so ever they be, living and dying without repentance, shall perish and be damned in hell fire for ever. The Scriptures are full of such thunderbolts. Iohn 3. 18. Hee that beleeveth not is damned alreadie. And 2. Cor. 13. verse 5. Proove your selves whether you are in the faith, examine your selves, know yee not your selves that Iesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? Where the Apostle flatly setteth downe that all those which have not Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith, which is the howsholde holder of repentance, are no better then reprobates,

pr[illegible]ates, caſtawaies, and condemned perſons. But bicauſe the moſt people in theſe daies are groſly deceiued in repentance, both concerning what it is, what it meaneth, what it worketh, what be the qualities and conditions of it, which be the cauſes, and which be the lets and hinderances, and alſo why, when, and wherefore we ſhould repent. Therefore I haue in preſent intent to teach firſt what is repentace. Secondly, which be his qualities and effects. Thirdly, when we ſhould repent. Fourthly, wherefore we ſhould repent. And laſt of al, what letteth us from repentance: which order and methode of teaching, although ſome may miſlike (as in deede with me it is not ordinarie) yet conſidering the matter I haue in hand, I thinke it not inconuenient. But to the matter. Repentance is an inward ſorrowing, and continuall mourning of the hart and conſcience for ſinne, ioyned with faith, and both inward and outward amendement. Inward, I ſay, in chaunging the thoughts and affections of the hart: and outward, in chaunging the words, and works, from euill to good. This repentance no doubt was in Dauid, who when he was couertly re-

proued by the Prophet Nathan, and his sinnes laide before his eies, did not stubbornly defende them, and so fullie against GOD: nor yet secretly excuse them, and daube them over, but cried out in the bitternesse of his heart: I have sinned, and therupon made the 51. Psalme. A Psalme indeed full of dolour and heavinesse: wherin the Prophet bewaileth his fals, lamenteth his sinnes, and praieth even for a new hart and a new spirite, newe thoughts, new affections, newe purposes of amendement of life. So that in David we may see an inward sorrowing, a lasting griefe, (as the booke of Psalmes doth every where declare, which laieth him out as it were in an Anatomie) yea, and great reformation: both in inward and outward sinnes. Here therefore beholde what is repentaunce. Likewise Saint Peter through infirmitie having denied his Lorde and Maister Christ, and being pinched of his owne conscience, and awakened with the alarme of a cocke crowing, went out of the Court of Pilate with an heavie hart weeping bitterly, and ever after stoutly professing Christ even unto the death. See then what is repentance. The Prophets

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in the old Testament, exhorting the rebellious Iewes unto repentance, use commonly an Hebrew Verbe, which signifieth, turne ye, or returne ye, and come back againe, by the which Metaphor is meant, that like as a man that is straied farre out of his way, must turne quite backe against the contrarie way: So those that have straied from the waies of godlinesse to the way of sinne, must come backe againe as fast as ever they went forward, and altogither change the course of their life: so that repentance is an earnest turning unto God with all our hart, soule, and minde. Saint John Baptist, and the Apostles in the newe Testament exhorting unto repentance, use a Greeke worde which signifieth a changing of the minde afterwarde, or after wit, so that those which through their follie, and want of former wit, have slipped into the deepe pit and daungerous gulfe of sinne, when they come to themselves, and have recovered their wits, will be wise afterwarde, and take heede they never come there againe, according to the Proverbe, The burnt childe will take heed of the fire. By this time I hope you see what is repentance. It is not every sorow,

but

but sorowe for sinne, not for some sinne, but for all sinne, not for an houer, but for ever, not for a day, but continually, not for a weeke, but as long as we liue. Some think every sorowe is repentance, but so should worldlings repent. Some thinke everie little pant for sinne is repentance, so should Pharaoh repent. Some thinke all weeping and lamenting for sinne is repentance: so should Esau, Iudas, & Caine repent. Some thinke every little humbling of our selues is repentance, but so should Achab repent. Some thinke that good words and good purposes is repentance: but so should every sicke man repent. Some thinke that reformation of words and deedes is repentance: but so should euil men repent. Some thinke that cry God mercie is repentance, and so should every foole repent. You see therfore how many are deceiued in repentance, but if you will see what it is in deede, looke backe to that which hath been saide afore. For he that will repent in good earnest, must not hang downe his head like a Bulrush for a day onely, and so haue done, nor cry from the teeth forward, Lord haue mercie on me, and so away: but he must make a backe reckoning with diligent consi-

dera-

ſideration of his former life, as did the Prophet Dauid, Pſalme 119. verſe 59. I have conſidered my waies, and turned my feet vnto thy teſtimonies. So muſt euery one that meaneth to repent, ſlinke aſide into ſome corner or out-place, that there he may haue roome enough to beate his owne conſcience, and to make his hart ſmart for his ſinnes, by aggrauation thereof, and weighing all the circumſtances, as in the 9. of Daniel. The Church of God confeſſeth hir ſinne, not lightly, but with wonderfull great exaggeration, and heaping of one thing to another. So that it is not ynough to ſay, I haue ſinned, but to ſay, I haue moſt traiterouſly ſinned, I haue moſt obſtinately, carelеſly, and rebelliouſly ſinned: I haue monſtrouſly offended in ſuch a place, in ſuch a houſe, in ſuch companie, in ſuch a day. In ſuch a corner in the darke I committed adulterie cloſely, when I thought none had ſeene me: in ſuch a chamber I defiled my neighbours wife: mine owne conſcience doth accuſe me of it. in ſuch and ſuch companie I haue beene drunke, I haue ſpoken and railed againſt Gods worde, I haue mocked the Preachers, I haue ſpared no othes nor filthie

ſpeech,

speech, and now O Lord, Lord what an ugly monster, and wretched villaine am I? Here I stand before thy presence all naked, blinde, wounded, poore, wretched and miserable, having deserved a thousande damnations, if thou shouldest enter into judgement, & trie the law with me. Therefore I beseech thee shew pittie and compassion upon me. Annoint my woundes with the oyle of mercie: Restore me my sight, cloath my nakednes, enrich me that am poore, strengthen me that am weake: helpe me up that am fallen: oh bid me not farewell. The infant overcommeth his mother with crying, the childe his father with weeping, and the servant his maister by entreatie, and wilt not thou be intreated O Lord? Thus I say, if everie man would speake in his conscience to God, and thus narrowly or more narrowly examine himselfe, undoubtedly he were in the way of repentance.

But alas it is a woorld to see how the blind Buzzards, and crooked Canker-wormes of this woorld go awrie from this rule, deceiving themselves with the bare title and naked name of repentance. Many in deed can talke of it: but few walke in it. Many

speake

speake of it: but few feele it. Many describe it: but few know it. It is hid and locked up from the world, and revealed onely to gods childrē. Many think they have caught it, when they have but the shadowe of it. It is so hie that few can reach it. It is so deepe that few can come to the bottome of it. It is so narrow, that few can enter into it. So wide, that few can comprehend it. So slipperie that few can hold it. So secret, that fewe can finde it. Therefore my deere brethren, I beseech you, let us pray unto our God, that he would reveal unto us this misterie which is hid from the world, that we may truely see it, and knowe it, finde it, and feele it, to our endlesse comfort, through Christ Jesus, which grace he graunt us. But now to the second point concerning the qualities and fruites of Repentance. One speciall qualitie of repentance, is alwaies to bring with it remission of sinnes: for where true Repentance goeth before, there remission of sinnes must necessarilie follow after, not that repentance deserveth Remission of sinne, but because where God worketh Repentance, there he pardoneth sinbecause of his promise. As in Ezech. 18. 27. When the wicked turneth away from

his wickednes, that he hath cõmitted, & doth that which is lawfull & right, he shall save his soule alive. And againe, Esa. 55. 7. Let the wicked forsake his waies, and the unrighteous his own imaginations, & returne unto the Lord, & he will have mercy upon him. So here we see, to whom forgivenesse of sinnes, and the mercy of God belongeth: namely, to the penitent sinners, to those that leave sin, and imbrace godlines: to those that forsake their owne waies and imaginations, and turn unto the Lord. And as for such as walke on, in their owne waies, and follow the delights of sin, without any sorow or purpose to leave thē, they have nothing to do with the mercy of God, & though Jesus Christ had suffred an hundred deaths (which coulde not be) yet shall no unpenitent sinner have remission of his sinnes by his death, nor any other benefite of his passion, for they belong onely to the Church and chosen people here upon the earth. He therfore that is not of the church, he that is not grafted into Christ by Faith, he that is not a member of his misticall body, can enjoy nothing by Christs death. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, & withereth, & men gather them

and caſt them into the fire, & they burne Ioh. 15.6. We reade in the 29. of Deuteronom. how God barreth all ſtubborne ſinners from his mercy, and doth moſt terribly ſhote out againſt them. He that heareth the wordes of this curſe, and bleſſeth himſelfe in hart, ſaieng: I ſhall have peace although I walke according to the ſtubbornes of mine owne hart, thus adding drunkennes to thirſt, the Lord will not be mercifull unto him, but the the wrath of the Lord, & his ſealouſie ſhall ſmoak againſt that man, & every curſe that is writte in the booke ſhall light upon him. So that God ſaith plainly, he hath no mercy for ſuch as walke in the vain delights of ſin, & in the ſtubbornes of their owne hart: adding drunkennes to thirſt: that is, joining one horrible ſin to another, yet for all this it is a wonder to ſee how the blinde worms of the earth deceive themſelves. For they think whatſoever they ſay, whatſoever they do, be it good be it evil, whether they repent, or not repent, yet they ſhall be ſaved by Chriſtes death, as though they woulde make it a bawde to their ſins, and ſo worke that villanie againſt Chriſt. I hope to be ſaved by Chriſtes death, as well as the beſt of them al, ſaith ſom. But where

is thy repentance thou miserable wretc
Doest thou think that Gods mercy is co
mon to all? And Christs death a balme
our sins: no, no, when it commeth to the
shot, thou shalt stop short. For it will pre
farre otherwise: For thou shalt find G
mercie turned into justice: & Christs de
into wormewoode, because thou hat
knowledge, and choosest not the fear of
Lord. Thus you see my derre brethren, t
repentance must needes go before forg
nesse of sinnes, and where it leadeth not
way, there the gates of gods mercy are s
up, and this is the first qualitie of Rep
tance. It hath also another condition,
that is to alter and change men from t
they were before, not in the substance
proportion of the body, but in the qualit
and conditions of the mind. For whose
hath truly repented, you shall by and by
a most marvellous and wonderfull cha
in him, so that he will not do as he h
done, nor speak as he hath spoken, nor c
panie as he hath companied, nor play
good felow (as they term it) as he was w
to do: nor run to the same excesse of rio
was wont. And this is it that mus
the world, and causeth them to bring
fo

me at the mouth like wild boares, and to
ake evill of them that turned unto God:
the world loveth his owne, and can not
de that God should plucke one feather
m his wings. But Repentance both vio-
ly pull men out of the clawes of Sa-
n, & change them from the conditions of
world: for it maketh of proud, humble:
rtfull, harmeleſſe: of cruell, meeke: of
lves, Lambes: of Lions, Sharpe: of a-
rers, chaſt livers: of drunkards, ſober
of ſwearers, reverent ſpeakers: of ha-
lovers: of deſpiſers, imbracers: of ſcof-
followers: of earthly, heavenly: of Di-
Saints. All this worketh Repen-
. Paule travailed towards *Damaſcus*,
ife, a perſecutor, a bloodſucker, an ha-
deſpiſer, but ere he came there, he was
changed, and clean of an other mind:
hty was he that met him by the way.
n Jeſus Chriſt ſent downe the holy
upon his Diſciples, according to his
ſe, there were ſome ſcoffers at *Jeruſa-*
which mocked and ſaid, They are full
wine. But the ſame men cried out
day after, Men and brethren, what
ll we do to be ſaved?
e was a moſt wonderfull, and ſodaine

change. See then the force of Repentan
when God striketh it into the hart of ma
and driveth the nail to the head as they s
it effecteth that which all the wisdome a
policie of man is not able to bring to pa
and when they have pulled hither a
thither, and laide their heads togither, s
sought all the corners of their wits, yet
they not tel which way to turn their ha
or where to begin to change the hart
man, and to convert him to God. Ther
repentance is stronger than all the wi
world, & worketh that which all men b
their naturall wits, fine heades, and
devises cannot compasse, for the conver
of a sinner is a worke supernaturall.
then we have a glasse, to behold our s
in, whether ever we have repented, a
For if we finde not this change and
ration in us, we have not repented, a
consequently remains under damna
Therfore let every man looke unto hi
for marke how much he is changed a
tered from his former evill waies, so
hath he repented. And he that is the
man, he was, three, fower, eight, nay
yeares ago: surely, surely, he hath not
ted, and therefore abideth in damnat

marvaile then how those men which never felt any change or alteration wrought in them, nay, whose consciences tel them, that they are not chãged ne know what it meaneth, can have any hope of salvation: unles peradventure they beleeve not this doctrin or thinke it to be false. I wil send over these men to such as have bene in the like case they now are, & yet thought they might do wel enough for all that, although both blind in judgement, and corrupt in conversation. I have knowne, and do know men, which before their conversion and inward change were counted as honest men as ever brake bread, and as substantial men as they could be, as true dealers, upright livers, and good house-kepers as any of their neighbours: yea, and they had the same opinion of themselves too. And yet notwithstanding when they have felt Repentance working this change and alteration in them, through the power of the spirit at the preaching of the word, and when they have had new harts given them to discerne better, and new eies to see better, as men come out of a dampe, have wondred and marvelled at the palpable and grosse darknes they were in before, and have burst forth into these words, that

they woulde not be in the same case they were afore, no not for all the worlds goods, for if they should have died in that case, they were sure they should have berne damned. But I pray you what case were they in before, were they not good honest men & well accounted of, and honest livers, & well taken whersoever they came? Surely they were so taken in the world, but now they thinke far otherwise of themselves, their eies being opened, and their judgements enlightned, for now they se that they saw not before, now they understand that God condemneth many whom the world justifieth. He thinketh this example should make civill and worldly men se and suspect themselves, and know their owne misery before God. For these men were as good as they, before their conversion, and yet afterward confessed that they were plunged to the bottom of hell, & drowned in the depth of damnation. He that hath eares to heare, let him heare, & he that hath eies to se, let him se: for if men will still setth themselves for all this, that they shal be saved without secking any change by worde of repentance, it will cost them full deare in the end. For Christs words will prove true, that whosoever re-

penteth

penteth not, shal be damned, that is, whosoever doth not feele in himselfe what is Repentance, and find in himselfe the qualities thereof shal be condemned. For where Repentance is, there be the qualities of Repentance, and where the qualities be absent, there is no true repentance. So that where Christ saith: Except ye repent, ye shall all perish: it is all one as if he had said, except ye know the truth of repentance, except ye can prove unto your consciences the forgivenes of your sinnes, except you feele a change & alteration in the bottome of your hart, of all your former lewd waies & misdemeanor, you shal surely perish & be damned. But let us yet a litle farther search out the qualities of Repentance: The Apostle in the seventh chapter of the second epistle to the *Corinthians*, setteth downe seven notable qualities and effects of Repentance. The first of them he nameth care. For behold saith he, this thing that you have bin godly sorie, what care it hath wrought in you, that is an earnest study and as it were a taking thought to please God. For where true repentance hath once wrought, there followeth great care afterward. Care I say, to live in the obedience of GOD. Care to

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kepe a good conscience. Care to reform our Houshold. Care to instruct Wives, Children & servants in the knowledge of God. Care to pray with them morning and evening: and generally, care to performe all duties belonging to God, so that repentance is not a carelesse, but a carefull thing. Let not men thinke therfore that although they welter in the carelesnesse of the flesh, & slepe in security all the daies of their life, yet their repentance is good enough, yea, and though they spend whole daies, nights, moneths, and yers in vanities, plaies, and pastimes, in idlenesse, fond delights, pleasure and voluptuousnesse, in negligence of all dutie, forgetfulnesse of God, and contempt of all good things: yet for al this they repent for their sins, and hope to be saved as wel as any other. But alas how cā these things stande togither, to repent for sinne, and to delight in sin: to hate sinne, and love sinne: to flie from sinne, and to follow after sin. But these men I perceive would faine make S. Paul a lier, for he saith a mā hath neber repented, except he be carefull afterward to please God: they say they do repent & haue repented, although they live never so wretchedly, and carelesly. But when all

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licentious and lewde livers, filthie whore-mongers, beastly belly-gods, & careleſſe caitifs, come to the kingdome of God, and are ſaved, then ſhall theſe men alſo come with them to be ſaved by careleſſe repentance.

The nert qualitie and effect of Repentance, is named clearing of our ſelves, that is, diſcharging of our ſelves, when ſin doth accuſe us, and lay things to our charge: for when ſin and Sathan doth terrifie the conſcience of the poore penitent ſinner, by and by he flieth unto God, and aſketh forgiveneſs through Jeſus Chriſt, and ſo cleereth himſelfe, and maketh his Apologie againſt ſin and Sathan, like as a man that is preſented into the Court, upon ſuſpicion of whoredome, or any other notorious crime, muſt cleare himſelf by witnes of that which is laid to his charge. So the conſcience that is cited by Sathan before the juſtice and judgement ſeate of God, cleereth it ſelfe by Repentance, and aſketh forgiveneſſe through Jeſus Chriſt. So that heere we may ſee a wonderfull fruit of a penitent conſcience, it cannot abide the accuſation of ſin. It cannot be quiet till it be reconciled unto God: and ſo have peace with it ſelfe. For this is to be noted in the godlie man, that

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when he hath committed any sinne, and his conscience telleth him of it, by and by he feeleth lead within him, and is all heavie, and cannot sleepe quietly, til he have gotten into some corner, where he may mourne and lament to the full, and confesse and lay open himselfe unto God, & so cleere himselfe thorowe Jesus Christ, his conscience bearing him witnes that his sin is forgiven. Whereas contrariwise the ungodly man, when his conscience accuseth him of sinne, he dispatcheth away all such thoughts, and treadeth them under foote, and by and by calleth for a paire of cards or tables, and some merrie companion to drive away the time, and to put out al such thoughts out of his head, and so indeed he increaseth them more and more and causeth them to rankle inwardly.

The third qualitie is called indignation, that is, a mortall and deadly hatred against sin: as when a man doth shudder and shake, and as it were grind his teeth at the remembrance of his sinne: for this is alwaies in the penitent person to loth and abhorre all sin from his hart, both his owne sinnes and the sinnes of other, and to hate it as the Divell himselfe, which is the author of it, and to flie from it, as from the very rut throte

and

and hangman of his soul, and to know it to be the only thing that blindeth, that hardeneth, that separateth from God, and procureth all plagues and diseases both of bodie and soule against us. Therefore he spitteth at it in defiance, and disdaineth it, and stoppeth his nose at the stinke of it, wheresoever he smelleth it.

The fourth thing is feare, which is a certaine awe of God, when a man is afraide to displease him. For the penitent person feareth alway, and being privie to his own infirmitie and weaknes (when God never so little withdraweth his grace, and leaveth him alone) worketh his salvation with feare and trembling. He will not presume upon former grace to commit any sin, or flatter himselfe in the mercie of God, and in the things that he hath already failed of God, to yelde to some little sinne, thinking he may do that, and be the childe of God well enough, because som of Gods children have fallen into greater: but rather he trembleth at the least motion of sinne, and is afraid of the temptations which Satan trumpeth in his way, and is afraid when the temptations of sinne are upon him, to satisfie the hunger of sinne, but rather he fighteth a-

gainst

againſt ſin, when ſin fighteth againſt him, and preſenteth the feare of God before his eies (as godly Joſeph in the aſſault of Putiphers wife) to be as it were a tower of defence and welſpring of life, to avoide the ſnares of death.

The firſt thing is deſire, that is, a hungering and thirſting after righteouſnes. For the penitent man is raviſhed with deſire of good things: he deſireth to be everie day better than other: he deſireth to leave every day ſome ſin: he deſireth to pray: he deſireth new knowledge, and new underſtanding of heavenly thinges. He deſireth to heare Sermons, and will ſtraine himſelfe to heare them. He deſireth the companie of the godly, he thinketh himſelfe in Heaven, when he is amongſt them. He deſireth the ſalvation of his very enimies, and praieth for them. All theſe and many other ſuch like deſires are in the penitent man.

The firſt quality is zeale, which conſiſteth in the earneſt imbracing of vertue, and hatred of vice, ſo that the penitent perſon is zelous in every good thing. Zealous of Gods glorie in all places, in all companies, and amongſt all perſons. He cannot abide that Gods honour ſhould be impeached, or

his

his name blasphemed, or his glory trampled under foot by wicked men, but he will open his mouth to reprove the wicked, and stand stoutly in the defence of Gods glorie. He is not like the Atheists, & Dissemblers, which are alwaies as is the company, that is, godly amongst the godly: a Protestant amongst Protestants: wicked amongst the wicked: a Papist amongst Papistes: a Worldling amongst Worldlings: and a Swearer amongst Swearers: a weathercocke that turneth with every winde. The penitent man I say, is not of this stampe, but he is constant and zealous in all good things. He is zealous both against the pleasures and profits of sinne, though he might win a whole world, or pleasure himself never so much, by committing a sinne against God, yet will he refuse it, for he hath learned from Christs mouth, that it shall not profite a man to win the whole world, and to lose his owne soule.

The last thing is Revenge, that is, the penitent person is so offended with the sin he hath committed, that he wil be revenged of himselfe for it. As for example, if he have offended in Gluttony, he wil revenge himselfe by fasting two or three daies after: If he

he haue offended in whoredome, he will be
reuenged of his lusts, by haltering & hyde-
ling of them euer after: if he haue offended
in couetous catching and polling of other
mens goods, he will be reuenged on himselfe
by restitution, as was godly and penitent
Zacheus, and this inderde is a speciall fruit
of Repentance, to reforme our selues in
those things, wherein we haue most offen-
ded. Now, then you se (my derre brethren)
what lieth in the bellie of Repentance, and
which lie hir inwards, so that we must
nedes now come to the unlacing and un-
bowelling of Christs words. Except ye re-
pent (saith he) yee shall all perish: that is
except ye haue this forenamed care, you
shall all be damned: Except you haue this
clering of your selues, you shall be damned:
except you haue this indignation, you shall
all be damned: Except you haue this feare
you shall be damned: Except you haue the
desire, you shall all be damned: except you
haue this zeale, you shall all be damned: Ex-
cept you haue this revenge, you shall all be
damned. For our Saviour Christ doth not
speake of the bare name of Repentance,
but of Repentance with all his furniture
and appurtenances, so that whosoever ha-

not Repentance with all his qualities and effects, or at the least some measure of the, he hath no repentance indeed, and therefore shall be damned: For except ye repent, ye shall all perish. But who thinketh that I speake some men say: There is nothing but damnatiō, damnation: You preach nothing but the Lawe: Let us heare of the Gospel. Wherefore I protest unto you, that I speake of love, whatsoever I speake. I desire the salvation of you all: If I could win but two in all this congregation, I would count my selfe happie, and thinke that God had greatly blessed my labours. And undoubtedly, if I knew any nearer way to bring you unto GOD, than by preaching the Lawe, to make you know your selves: Surely, surely, I would use it. If I could be perswaded that the preaching of the Gospell, and mercie would make you more godly: you should heare of nothing but Gospell, Gospell, Mercy, Mercy: But alas, I see that every carelesse and ignorant man presumeth upon Gods mercie: I see that every filthy liver, and notorious blasphemer, abuseth Gods mercie, in applying it to himselfe without repentance, so that

they would make Gods mercy a cloake for their sinnes: I see that every man would faine be flattered in sinne, and heare of it no more, but have the Gospell preached, which in deede belongeth not unto them, continuing in their stubbornes, but onely to the penitent sinner, which forsaketh himself and groneth, and panteth under the burden of his sinne. Therefore when I see you humbled with the conscience of your sinnes, and grone and pant under the burden of them: when I see your faces blubbered with weeping, and your harts mollified and sorrowing with care, then will I comfort you, and cease to preach the lawe. But I pray you, will you steale, murther, and commit adulterie, and yet heare of mercy? Will ye mock, swear, blaspheme, and raile, and yet heare of mercie? Will you serve sinne, hate vertue, and follow your olde lusts, and yet heare of mercie? Would you have Plaisters before you have wounds? Would you have Physicke before you be sicke? Would you be let bloud before you have neede? Would you not accounte him a folish Physicion that will minister physicke to a whole man? Would you not think him

an unskilfull Chirurgion, that will applie a gentle Salve to an olde festered sore, and not rather corrie it? Then knowe you my brethren, that bicause you are full of grosse humors, you must have strong purgations bicause you are full of old festered wounds, you must have corrasive Salves, for that is the best for you, and the speedest way to recover your health: and forasmuch as you be rough Horses, you must have a rough Rider: and hard knobbie Timber must have hard Wedges, and hard strokes with a beetle. We preach the Lawe to drive you to Christ: we preach judgement to make you seeke mercy: we preach damnation to bring you to salvation. But to preach mercy and forgivenesse before men see their sinnes, or knowe their miseries by the preaching of the Law, is to preach the Gospell unprofitably. For he that is ignorant of the Law, knoweth not what miserie is in himselfe: nor what mercy is in God.

What father is there, who if his childe should play the stubborne boy, and disobey him in every thing he commanded, would strike his head, and say he were a good boy not rather severely correct him, and

whip him with a rod? What maister will cõmend his seruant for doing what he list, and not what he commandeth him: euen so we may not disobey, and do euill, and looke to be flattered to, and not rather chidden. Let us know then, that although God vse fearing, launcing, cozzing, and searching of the bones, and other violent remedies, yet in the mean while he procureth our health by them. And let us further vnderstande, that for as much as there is none other meanes to draw vs to saluation, but by clensing of all our vices, and the same cleansing cannot be done but by violence, when we be warned by the doctrine of the Law, & as our owne conscience accuse vs, although we like well to be no we and then flattered and soothed, yet let us seeke to be spoken vnto earnestly, to haue our faults told vs, and to be made ashamed of them, and to haue our vnhonestie discouered, and not desire to be pleased. For it were the next way to make vs rot in our owne filthines if we should hold it so in secret: & it would cost vs deere the setting on, if we should be so flattered by men, and in the meane season the heauenly iudge shal thunder vpon vs

upon us.

Therefore when any man commeth to a Sermon, let him first and foremost make his reckoning to be rebuked, as meete is, and let him understand, that it is for his profit, that he is not soothed. And if he have itching eares, let him lay them away from him, assuring himself that els he is forecloſed, so as he shal never receive the doctrin to his profit and instruction. And let him be content to have his sores rubbed and bewraied, that he may be brought to that, which is for his welfare. If a man please a sicke body, what shall become of him, shal he give him drink every minute of an houer? shall he give him wine, where as he should give him water? shall he give him shallots? It were the next way to poison him. To do that, it is certain that a man doth al whiles sicke sometimes doth, when he would have men soth him. But now which is better, to doe that he which hath the ordering of a sicke man, should yeelde to all his desires, or rather he should handle him, notwithstanding that he cry and grudge his belly, because he perceiveth his own will in him desireth that he see (therefore how dangerous a thing

it is to flatter? raise up men with the preaching of mercy, before they have beene cast downe with the sense of gods judgements. Cease therefore to open your mouthes to make hue and crie over the Country, saying: They preach nothing but the Law, the Law, Damnation, Damnation, unlesse ye will take in Christ to, and make him one of the number, and accuse him of want of wisdome: Because he preacheth and crieth out that whosoever repenteth not shall be condemned. For my part, I preach the Gospell to whom the Gospell belongeth, and the Law to whom the Law belongeth. I preach mercy to whom mercy belongeth, judgement to whom judgement appertaineth. And therefore hold your peace and be content to be ruled by the wisdom of God. But now let us proceed to the third generall point, which is the time when we should repent.

The holy Ghost in the Scriptures pointeth us to the present time, exhorteth us to make that the time of our repentance [illegible]. Wherefore, although the Law saith, turne you unto me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping and with mour[illegible]

ning. Likewise in the 3. chapter to the Hebrewes: Exhort one another while it is called to day, least any of you be hardened through the deceitfulnesse of sinne. And in the same chapter. To day if ye will heare his voice, harden not your harts as in the provocation: So that now, even now, even now, is the time of our repentance.

Now whilest he calleth, now whilest he speaketh, now whilest he knocketh, let us now therfore heare: let us now therfore obey: let us now therfore redeeme this day: this present Wensday, which have followed so many dates, which have so long hardened our harts, which have let so many good things run out, and spill besides: let us take up this day, and make it the day of our repentance. Although we could never be moved with any Sermon hitherto, yet let us now be moved once at last: Let us now say, This shall be my day of repentance, I will deferre it no longer, but now will I turne unto my God, and forsake all my former wicked waies, and mine owne imaginations: I will now change the course of my life, and begin all new againe. I will be acquainted with Gods word, and take

counsel there how to do, and how to behave my selfe in every action. I will not only reforme my self, but also my whole household, wife, children, and servants, according unto the same. Thus my deere brethren, I beseech you, purpose in your hearts without any further delay, that ye be not like to Epicures and flashe-gazers, which say, Youth will be youthfull, and youth will have a course, and what should we make it so holy to bee we are young: said, there needes but amendment houre before death, let us be merry now, we shall never be younger, we will repent when we are olde. As though those fooles, they had repentance in their hearts and at their commandement, and that they could repent when they will. No, no, these foolish shall pay for their presumption. For God will give them over to hardnesse of heart, and impenitencie, because they take so much upon them, and make so long delaies, that in the meane season they might enioy the profits & pleasures of sinne. Therefore good brethren let us not put it off from day to day, but let us now seeke the Lord whilest he may be found, and call upon him whilest he is neere: let us take time while

time is for time and tide tarieth for no man. Let us know this to be the time of our visitation. Our Saviour Christ wept over Hierusalem, because they knew not ꝑ time of their visitation. He reproveth the Jewes because they could discerne the face of the sky, but could not discerne the signes of the times. And surely in the ende it will turne to our destruction, if we will not know this to be the day of mercie, the time of grace, wherein God stretcheth forth his hand unto us, and wisedom crieth out in the streets. Therefore now whilest we have the light let us walke as children of the light: the night commeth when no man can worke. It shall be too late to call for mercie after this life, when the gates of mercie are shut up; and repentance will be too late. Dyuelish Christians, let us remember the five foolish Virgins, which because they followed the time, had heauē gates shut vp against them. Let us also remember the fearfull & wofull example of the rich glutton, which being in hell torments, yelled and yelped for the least ease & helpe that might be, and could not have it. An hundred thousand times therefore, better it is for us to leave our sin

now to mourne for them, now and now to repent, than hereafter, alas, when it will be to late. Better now a great deale to take some paines, to straine our selves to leave our sinnes, & to make our hart smart for them, than to be condemned for ever, and to crie in the bottome of Hell: We have wearied our selves in the way of wickednes and destruction, and we have gone thorow dangerous waies: but we have not knowen the way of the Lord. What hath pride profited us? Or what profit hath the pomp of riches brought us? All those things are passed away like a shadowe, and as a post that passeth by. We have set our selves against the children of God, we have had them in derision, & in a parable of reproch, we fooles thought their life madnesse, and their end with dishonor, but loe they are counted amongst the children of God, and their portion is among the Saints. Therefore let us knowe the time of our calling, and let us not be worse than the foules of the aire: The Turtle, the Crane, and the Swallow, observe the times of their coming. The husbandman taketh his time. The mariner watcheth his tides. There-

for

fore, let us also take the time and turne unto the Lord, whilest it is said to day, which grace God grant us.

Now let us returne unto the fourth point concerning the causes, which may move us unto repentance. Herein I have observed nine especiall thinges. First, the great mercy of GOD, leadeth us unto repentance, as Rom. 2. The bountifulnesse of God, leadeth us unto repentance, saieth the Apostle. God doth continually followe us, with his mercies and benefits, both concerning our soules and bodies, we have no good thing, which we have not received at his hands, we hold all that we have of him and to him are we beholding for all, great is his mercie towards our bodies, but much greater towards our soules, and every merry and benefite, either towarde soule, or bodie, calleth us to repentance. He giveth us meate, drinke, and clothing, these call us to repentance: he keepeth us at his owne costs and charges here below, this calleth us to repentance: the Sunne, the Moone, and the Starres, call us to Repentance. The Birdes of the aire, the Fishes of the Sea, and the fruits of the earth

erie

crie out upon us both lowd and shrill: Repent, repent. All creatures move us to repentance. Our creation calleth, our redemption crieth, our Sanctification knocketh, and our Election moveth to repentance. What could God doe more for his Vineyard that he hath not done. Therefore let us repent.

Secondly, the Judgements of GOD move us unto repentance, for all the thunderbolts, Plagues, and Punishments, which God hath throwen downe upon obstinate sinners, from the beginning of the world, are so many warning peeces unto us to awake us out of the dead sleep of sin, and to pricke us to Repentance. As in the first Cor. 10. Whe the Apostle had cited divers great judgements of GOD, against the old Israelites for divers sinnes, he concludeth, how all these things came unto them for ensamples, & were written to admonish us, upon whom the ends of the world are come. So that all the Judgements we reade of in the Scriptures, are so many admonitions, and as it were Cart-ropes to draw us to Repentance. All the Judgements we read of, heare of, see, and

heare

hear of every day, knock with main strokes beate downe-right upon our consciences to Repentance. The ugly mōsters, strange birthes, strie constellations, unknowen Comets, sudden death, marvellous droughes, unwonted inowes, horrible inundations, fearfull wonders, straunge apparitions, threatning of heaven above, with stroming and flashing fire, trembling of the earth under our feet, and our houses over our heads, as of late day: What are all these, but as it were great Cranes with beames, and Cable Ropes, to drawe us up to the Lord by repentance.

Thirdly, the word of God healeth us to Repentance. For, as God in old time sent his prophets, both early and late, to call the rebellious Jewes to repentance: so he sendeth abroad his preachers, and messengers in these daies, to sound up ȳ trumpet of his word, and to ring the swet bel of Aaron amongst them, to awake thē to repentance, but alas, how lightly are they regarded? Who heareth their voice? But surely this is the last remedy that God hath apointed, and if this will not move us to repentance, if this will not cure us, then are we altogether

ther uncurable.

Fourthly, the infinite number of sinnes we have committed, ought to be so many spurres in our sides, to pricke us to repentance. It is sufficient, saith Saint Peter, that we have spent the time past of our life after the lustes of the Gentiles, walking in wantonnes, lusts, Drunkennesse, Gluttony, Drinkings, and all abhominable Idolatries. Therefore, it is time nowe to Repent. Oh that men would looke backe to themselves, as they were fortie, thirtie, twentie or ten yeres agoe. Oh that they would call to minde, their open and secrete sins, and me thinketh it should make their hart bleed within their belly, to think upon them. Oh that they would consider how much time they have mispent, and how many good things they have neglected, and altogither omitted.

Fiftly the shortnesse of our life, calleth earnestly upon us to Repent. The time of our life is fortie yeres and ten, and if they be of strength eighty yeres, yet the strength is but labour and sorrowe, so is it cutte of quickly, and we flie away saith the Prophet David, we have spent our yeres as a

though

thought. Therefore he addeth: Teach us to number our daies, that we may apply our harts unto wisedom. Our life for the shortnes, and inconstancie of it, in the Scriptures is compared to grasse, to a vapour, to smoke, to a Weavers shuttle which glideth away swiftly. Even so the daies of mã passe away, no man knoweth how. Man is of short continuance, saith Iob, and full of trouble. Experience teacheth, that to day a man, to morrow none. Hence away we must al, here is no abiding place for us, how sone we know not. Therefore let us repent.

Thirdly, the small number of those which shall be saved, ought to thrust forward to repentance. Strive to enter in at the narrow gate: For many I say unto you will seke to enter in, and shall not be able, saith Christ, Luk. 13. 24. And in another place he saith, The gate is straight, and the way narrow that leadeth unto life, & few there be that find it. If men would consider of this, it would make them seke better about them, and try with themselves whether they be of that small number or no.

Seventhly, death threatneth us, who is very

very terrible to the flesh, & the remembrance of it very bitter to a man that is soused and soked in the pleasures of this world. It flattereth no man, it regardeth no persons, it weigheth not friendship, it careth not for rewards, it is very grim, ugly, and cruell, and killeth downe right where it hitteth. Therfore let us repent.

Eightly, the day of judgement and second appearing of the Sonne of Man, will come as a Theefe in the night, in the which the heavens shall passe away with a noise, and the Elements shall melt with heate, and the earth with the workes that are therein, shall be burnt up: seing therefore that all these things must be dissolved, what maner of persons ought ye to be in holie conversation and godlinesse, saith S. Peter. 2. 3. The Lord Jesus shal shew himselfe from heaven, with his mighty Angels in flaming fire, rendring vengeance unto them that knowe not God, and obey not unto the Gospell of our Lord Jesus Christ, saith the Apostle, 2. Thes. 1. I saw, saith S. John, Apoc. 20. a great white Throne, and him one that sate on it, from whose face fled away, both the earth and the heaven, and

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their place was no more found. And I sawe the dead, both great and small stand before God: and the bookes were opened, and another booke was opened, which is the booke of life, & the dead were judged of those thinges, which were written in the bookes according to their workes. And the Sea gave up hir dead, which were in hir, and Death and Hel delivered up the dead which were in them: & they were judged every man, according to his woorkes. In these places we see, both the sodainenesse, the fearefulnesse, and glory of Christs comming. For he shall not come purely, and contemptuously, as in the first visitation, but he shal come very Princely, royally, and triumphantly to the great terrour of all his enemies, when a consuming fire shall goe before him, and ten thousand thousandes of Angels waite upon him: at that time the kinges of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chiefe captaines, and the mightie men, and every bondman, and every free man, shall hide themselves in dennes, and amongest the rockes of the mountaines, and say to the rocks and mountaines, fall on us, and hide

us from the presence of him, that sitteth on
the throne, & from the wrath of the Lambe,
for the great day of his wrath is come, and
who can stand? Apoc. 6. Therefore let us
repent.

The last thing is hell torments, than the
which nothing is more intollerable. Wher-
fore saith Christ. Marke 9. If thine hand
cause thee to offend, cut it off. It is better
for thee to enter into life maymed, than
having two hands, to goe into hell, into
the fire that never shall bee quenched.
Where the worme dieth not, and the fire
never goeth out. The Scripture speaketh
terrible to our senses, concerning the estate
of the damned persons, calling it hell fire,
damnation, the lake that burneth with fire
and brimstone for ever. In the thirty chap-
ter of the prophesie of Esay, it is called
Topheth, and it is even prepared of old,
is even prepared for the king: he hath made
it deepe and large, the burning thereof
fire and much wood, the breath of the Lord
like a river of brimstone doeth kindle it.
These speeches are terrible to our sense,
and may marvellously amaze us. But if
had the tounge of an hundred men,

an hundred Angels, yet were I not able to utter them as some shal one day feele them, much lesse were you able to conceive them. If all the tortures and cruel tormentes that can be devised by the wit of man, were executed upō some one, yet were it nothing to this. We poore wretches thinke there is no paine to a collicke, or a cruell ague. But if all collickes, agues, and all other straunge diseases could possibly light upon one man, it were but a flea-biting to that which is to come. The paine is endelesse, easelesse, and remedilesse. The dates of their hellish tormentes shall never weare out, nor their yeeres come to an end, the longer they continue, the lesse hope have they. When as many yeeres are expired, as there be men in the world, and starres in the heavens: when as many thousand yeeres are ended, as there be Stones and Sand by the Sea shore: yet will there be v. hundred thousand times so many mo to come. Those that will not now be moved in hearing, shal then be crushed to pieces in feeling. All drunkards, swearers, whoremongers, usurers, extortioners, liers, mockers, contemners, secure persons, jolly fellowes, roisting ruf-

flams, luſtie blouds, the brave lads of this world, and all other unbelievers, ſhall one day be apprehended, and arraigned before the Barre of Gods tribunall ſeate, where the majeſtie of God ſhal ſtand above them, with a naked ſword of vengeance, and a ſceptre of juſtice. The Divell that old Sathanas ſhall ſtand on the one ſide to accuſe them, and their owne conſcience of the other ſide to condemne them, and the gaſping gulfe of Hell underneath them readie to ſwallow them up for evermore. Then ſhall the dreadfull ſentence of eternall woe and damnation proceede againſt them: Goe ye curſed into hell fire, &c. There they ſhall drinke as a juſt recompence of their iniquitie, the bitter cup of Gods eternall wrath and indignation, in the kingdome of darkneſs, and in the fearefull preſence of ſathan and all the curſed enemies of Gods grace where the dolefull drumme of Gods angels ſhal ever ſound through their eares, where ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth where ſhall be confuſion, woe, and endleſſe lamentation. Their gripes ſhall be great, their grones ſo deepe, and their garbeiles unſupportable, that they ſhall grin like a dog

in their infernall conbulſions, & with howling and yelling crie out: wo, and alas that ever I was borne: Oh that I had never bene borne, or that my mother had born me a toad. For then my condition ſhould have bene better than it is. Curſed was the time I was begot in, the houre I was conceived in, and the day that I ſucked my mothers paps. Curſed I was alwaies, curſed I am, & curſed I ſhall be for evermore. Woe, wo, how great is my torment, whoſe hart doth not melt, whoſe eares doe not glow, whoſe haires doth not ſtand upō his head to heare theſe things. Therefore deare brethren let us repent. If the mercy of God cannot allure us, let his judgements ſcarre us. If his judgements cannot ſcarre us, let his word mowe us. If his word cannot mowe us, let our ſinnes amaze us. If our ſinnes can not amaze us, let the ſhortnes of our life dampe us. If the ſhortnes of our life cannot dampe us, let the ſmall number of thoſe that ſhalbe ſaved, affray us. If that cannot affray us, let death terrifie us. If death cannot terrifie us, let the day of judgement ſhake us: If that cannot ſhake us, yet let hell tormentes thunder us, & rent us in pieces. For verily

my brethren, if none of all these can prevaile, if we will not for all this repent, but be obstinate, then we shall all perish and be damned according to Christs words. Now let us proceede to speake of those thinges which let and hinder us from repentance, which in deede although they be in number infinite, yet at this time I will lay forth seven speciall lets, and hinderances, unto repentance.

The first is unbeleefe, that is, when men will not beleeve those things that are spoken and prowed unto them out of the word of God. This is it that vomiteth up all good things and poisoneth the very intrals of a man, and keepeth all good graces from us. As appeareth Math. 13.58. He did not many great workes there, for their unbeliefs sake. And in the 4. to the Hebrewes it is said. Vnto us was the Gospell preached, as also unto them, but the woord that they heard, profited not them, because it was not mixed with faith, in those that heard it. So that here we may see, although we heare never so much, yet if we bring not faith with us, we shall never profit unto repentance. For unbelief taketh

up our harts for Satan, and refuseth all the wholesome doctrine of salvation, and doth so harden them in the waies of sinne, that in the end they become past feeling, and can not be touched one whit: either with the judgements or mercies of God: but count the one as blasts of wind, and make the other a covert for their filthines. You shall note some men, who when they have heard their sins straightly ripped up by the word of God, and their just damnation proved by the same, without speedy and earnest repentance, will breake out into these words of unbelefe: If it be as he saith, God helpe us, I hope it is not so, I trust I shall do well enough for all this, as long as I have a good faith in God, and doe no body no harme. Shall I leave my pleasures and my profits for their sayings? What? doe they thinke none shall be saved, but such as reade the Scriptures, and heare sermons: God forbid but those which do not go to heare sermons, should be saved as well as they: Why may not one serve God as well at home in his house, having good bookes, and good prayers, as by comming to the Church to heare sermons and service? Alas, these

men ſtand to much in their own light, and bewraie what folly and ignorance is in them. For do they thinke to be ſaved by any other meanes then God hath appointed: or when God hath avouched any thing in his word, will they except againſt it, & ſo make God a lier? when God hath once ſet downe a thing, & prooved it to their faces, will they yet replie? When God hath told us that the preaching of the word is the ordinarie meanes of our ſalvation, ſhall we hope to be ſaved, although we contemne it, & never or very ſeldome heare it? Is not this plaine infidelitie and unbeleefe, that when God ſaith one thing we will ſay another: when God ſaith yea, we will ſay, no, I hope not ſo. Yes ſurely that is it that ſtoppeth the way unto Gods graces, and barreth us out from repentance.

The ſecond let is this preſumption of gods mercy, for if men be ſharply reproved for their ſinnes, and exhorted unto repentance, by and by they take covert, ſaying: God is mercifull, God is mercifull, as though God were made all of mercy, and that there were no juſtice in him at all: and thus the wicked make Gods mercy an occaſion

casion to sinne, which thing the Prophete Nahum in the first of his prophesie doth sharpely reprove, the Lord (saith he) is slow to anger, but he is great in power, and wil not surely cleere the wicked. But because I have spoken afore of this presuming and misapplying of Gods mercy, I will here passe it over, willing you to note it as one speciall let unto repentance.

The third hinderance is the example of the multitude, for that doth harden and imbolden men unto sin. As when many birds flicker and flocke together, they fall upon the Net without any feare: but one or two alone will be afraide. Even so the examples of many, and many sinne companions doe imbolden men to runne through the snares of Sathan without any mistrust. Therefore it is saide in Exodus 23. Thou shalt not follow a multitude to doe evill. This is the thing that hindreth a great number from god: for they never looke up unto God or to his word, but stare upon the common doings of most men, and examples of the world, thinking if they do as the most men doe, as their forefathers have done before them, they are cocke sure and of an even

ground

ground. And hereupon ariſeth their diuel-
liſh prouerbe: Do as moſt men do, and the
feweſt will ſpeake of you: but they haue
forgotten S. Paules rule, Rom. 12. Faſhion
not your ſelues like unto this world.
Theſe followes that ſtand upon multitude,
will reaſon thus: Wee ſee none of the great
ones of the world, none of the noble, none
of the rich, none of the wiſe and prudent,
receiue this doctrine, but only a few ſhack-
rags and beggerly raſcals, and therefore it
is a token that it is nothing worth, and
that it is doubtfull, and not for us to med-
dle withall. Lo what thoughts may creepe
in our heades, and how ſlily Sathan may
trump in our way, and blindfold us, and
leade us away in the darke, by doting us
with the example of the multitude. There-
fore let us take heede of thoſe pitfalles,
which Sathan laieth in our way, and not
be carried away with theſe thoughts and
reaſons. The wicked beare themſelues in
hand that they ſhall winne the game, and
that the goale goeth on their ſide, and there
is nothing but crowing long before it be
day, and great triumphing amongeſt them
before any ſtroke be ſtrikey, and that be-
cauſe

cause we be but a handfull of people, & they a great multitude, and that in a maner the whole world agreeth with them to practise our death. Thus the devill doth cast a mist before their eies, and closely lead them away from Repentance. Therefore deare brethren, let us stand fast in the word of the Lord, and not be caried away, or bowed quite downe with this raging streame of the multitude: but let us know it to be one speciall engine of Sathan, whereby he driveth us from repentance.

The fourth let unto repentance, is long custome of sinne. For that taketh away all sense and feeling of sinne, and maketh it as it were another nature unto us: so that we may as wel alter nature, as shake it of whē it is once thus soldred unto us through long custome. Therefore it is said: Iere. 13.23. Can the black Moore change his skinn? or the Leopard hir spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to doe evil. Here the prophet affirmeth, that it is as hard to cure an olde disease that is bred in the bones, and to remedie a sinne that hath bene hatched and brought up with us, as to wash a blacke More white, or to change

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the spotz of a Leopard, which cannot b
without destroying of nature. And surel
try it who wil, he shal find it as hard a mat
ter to leave an old custome, whether it be
swearing, of gaming, of lying, or whoring
of evil company, or of any other sinne, as t
wash an Ethiopian. Therfore it is written
Prou. 17. Though thou shouldest braie a
foole in a morter, among wheate brayed
with a pestell: yet will not his foolishnesse
depart from him. So that as long as we
are in custome with sinne, the doze of Re
pentance is barred up against us.

The fift hinderance, is long escaping o
punishment, for the wicked thereby are
harkened in sinne, & driuen off from repen
tance, euen as an old theefe that hath stolne
a long time, and escapeth both prison and
gallowes, is animated more boldly to pro
ceede in his wickednesse, thinking he shall
so alwaies escape. So many filthy and lasc
tiuers, goe forward in their abhominations
without Repentance, thinking that be
cause God doth not incontinently punish
them, and shew some manifest judgement
and signe of his wrath upon them, therefore
they shalbe acquited for altogither. Where
as

contrariwise, if God should by and by strike them downe as soone as they had sinned, by thundring upon one, and lightning upon another, and raining fire and brimstone upon the third, it would make them afraide. Hereupon it is said in 2 Pet. 2.3.4. This first understand, that there shall come in the last daies mockers which will walke after their lusts, and say, where is the promise of his comming? For since the fathers died, all things continue alike from the beginning of the creation. But let these men well know that when God hath delated a long time, and prolonged the terme of the wicked, at length he will shew that although he waited for their repentance, yet he forgate not their mildnes, but registred them before him, and packed them up upon a great heape, to encrease the terrour of his wrath.

The first hinderance, is the beholding of other mens ends. For when some men that have lived a wicked, and an ungratious life, and have been notorious sinners even to the world-ward, so that every man could point at them: yet if upon their death-bed they can saie a fewe good wordes

and

and cry God mercy, and say their praiers and forgive all the world, and so die quietly, it is marvailous to heare, how sufficiently people of the world, will erait them and justifie them, saieng: He made a very good end as any man could make, he died as quiet as a Lambe, and set all things in good order before he died. Herupon another wicked and monstrous verlet is encouraged to sinne. For thinketh he, such a man lived as lasely as I, or any man else, and yet he made a very good end, and why may not I do so to, but alas these mens eies are bleared, For to die quietly, is not to die godly, to crie God mercy for fashion, is not to have God mercifull, to say a few praiers from teth outward, is not to dis in the faith of Christ, for many doe all this, and yet die miserably.

The last let, is hope of long life, for while men live, and besot themselves in this hope they wax drunken in sinne, and deferre the day of repentãce. As the rich man in the parable of Luke, dreaming of his long life, cast of all thought of God, and of the other life, and of Christes comming, & of repentance, and all good things, and said within himself: Soul, thou

you haue much goodes laid up for many
yeres, liue at ease, eate, drinke, and take thy
pastime. Thus the bleare eyed men of the
world choke up Repentance, and quite
smother it, by voting themselues with
hope of long life. Therefore my deare bre-
thren, I beseech you by the mercies of God
in the bowels of Iesus Christ, that none
of all these common lettes may staie you
from speedie and vnfeigned Repentance:
But that you may ouerslide them all, least
vnhappilie you being found without Re-
pentance, and taken tardie in your sinnes,
should all perish and be damned, accord-
ing to Christes sentence. Wherefore in
conclusion, let vs with godly Ezechias be
afraide of Gods threatnings, sorrow a-
fore hand, stand in awe of GOD, examine
our consciences, mourne for our sinnes, and
lament inwardly, that when the wicked
which haue swimmed in pleasures here
below, shall enter into their eternall paines,
we may then, I say there, haue euerla-
sting peace & rest, that when Iesus Christ
shall appeare from heauen with all his ho-
ly Angels, we may haue crownes of glo-
ry, and raigne with our GOD, and our

Sauiour

FINIS.

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